

4. Design Principles

Basic Design Principles

The following principles are the foundation and reference point for the plan goals and the policies and standards developed later in this plan:

1. ***Enhance Community Life:*** Urban and project design should create a composition of buildings, open spaces and streets that appears pleasing and inviting for a vibrant community life.
2. ***Generate Commercial and Public Activity:*** An aspect of design should be to include small spaces and corridors that are safe from vehicle movement and encourage people to circulate, stop and rest and gather. Stores and dining should be designed and located next to these spaces to provide easy access and attract activity.
3. ***Provide Mixed Uses:*** The design of projects should include a mix of residential, office, and commercial land uses that encourage people to live near any shopping opportunities and work together to vitalize the community.
4. ***Ensure Pedestrian Circulation:*** Provisions for pedestrians should include safe and efficient walking routes, facilities for bicycles and transit, convenient parking lots, and attractive features to relieve the necessity of using a vehicle and to add a sense of community.
5. ***Attractive and Safe Streetscape Design:*** Streets and sidewalks should be designed for safe traffic control, smooth traffic flow for all types of travel, pedestrian orientation, and be visually pleasing.
6. ***Ecological Responsibility:*** Design with respect to nature, avoid impacts that could damage or disrupt the environment, and incorporate natural features in the area.



Figure 4-1 West Tefft Street Concept

Land Use Locations

Land uses are typically comprised of single-purpose structures (such as retail buildings), parking lots and landscape, which often are designed to maximize convenience between parking spaces and building entrances. Major retail stores particularly require this convenient access, which results in parking lots in front of stores that can often be remote and disconnected from the fronting street. However, in a downtown the emphasis is on community activity and convenient, comparison shopping, which is best supported by walkable and interesting streets.

Stores along sidewalks provide the access and attraction for pedestrian travel. Studies have shown that pedestrians are more likely to continue walking, (a) if they sense an enclosure, or room-like effect along a street and (b) if they have visual stimuli that interest them along the way. Frequent access points to stores and other uses are essential along a street. Economically, a downtown pedestrian environment benefits individual stores if they are all located to maximize pedestrian access to each one.

The West Tefft Street corridor will have large community-serving markets, drug stores and entertainment centers that may locate behind parking lots. However, the street frontage of these uses needs to include adjacent or closely spaced uses that provide pedestrian access from the sidewalk. Interruptions in a continuous façade of buildings along streets should be the exception, to provide vehicle driveways, views into larger stores, or small parking bays.



Fig. 4-2 Sidewalk environment

Mixed-Use Development

The most effective approach to reducing vehicle traffic and creating sociable downtown settings is to develop a mixture of land uses within buildings or near each other. The community of Nipomo, like many, has a disparity between local employees' incomes and the cost of housing. The economic and social health of the community would be enhanced by reducing this disparity. Mixing commercial with residential uses can provide affordable housing opportunities and reduce an often-expensive reliance on the automobile. However, designers must address potential conflicts between uses in the site planning and architecture of projects, so that deliveries, utilities, fire safety and secure access are provided without negative impacts to residents and businesses.

Public Streetscape Principles

The following public streetscape principles provide a reference point for the standards in this report. A cohesive streetscape plays an integral role in the overall aesthetic success of a street and proves that urban design goes beyond just building architecture.

West Tefft Street

As West Tefft Street is currently the only direct boulevard between East and West Nipomo, large volumes of traffic are anticipated. West Tefft Street will be designed to accommodate projected high traffic levels for ease of travel while providing for alternative modes of transportation – walking, bicycling and transit.



Fig. 4-3 Section of potential West Tefft Street

1. **Wide Sidewalks.** Sidewalks should be a minimum eight feet to 18 feet in width, including the use of paved setback areas to provide public spaces for pedestrians. An offer of dedication may be required for the necessary right-of-way to provide the desired sidewalk width.
2. **Street Furniture.** Street furniture such as light posts, benches, banners, flower pots, public art and trash receptacles should coordinate with building architecture to create an aesthetic appeal and complement Olde Towne furniture.
3. **Landscaping.** Canopy street trees should be planted along the street edge in parkways, between the sidewalk and buildings, and to screen or soften walls. Flowering bushes, perennials, and shrubbery should be planted throughout the study area to soften the "hardscape."
4. **Gathering Spaces.** Public and private gathering spaces such as outdoor dining, plazas and pocket parks should be provided to enhance the pedestrian experience and community activity.



Fig. 4-4 Streetlight

5. **Landscaped Median.** Center islands should divide the street to prevent crossing movements and provide green landscaping, as shown in Figure 4-5. To allow for visibility of businesses, tall trees, low shrubs or flowers should be included.
6. **Crosswalks.** Well-defined crosswalks should be included that allow for the safe access and movement of pedestrians throughout the area.



Fig. 4-5 Landscaped median

Mary Avenue and Blume Street

Mary Avenue and Blume Street will be extended to ease traffic congestion on West Tefft Street during peak hours, and they should be designed to accommodate pedestrians. Smaller-scale buildings are likely than on West Tefft Street, and with the narrower widths of these streets the opportunity is great to create a comfortable pedestrian environment. Except for landscaped medians, the principles for West Tefft Street are important here as well, and attention to the following additional ones will encourage pedestrian activity. Smaller scale offices, cafes, and boutiques should make up the development on these streets, with easily accessible and landscaped linkages to the larger, busier West Tefft Street.



Fig. 4-6 Section of potential Mary Avenue or Blume Street

1. **Continuous Sidewalks and Street Furniture.** Sidewalks should be provided to continue pedestrian linkages between West Tefft and surrounding streets, and street furniture is very important to provide an inviting presence.
2. **Complementary Uses.** Uses should be compatible with neighboring ones and relate to the retail core of businesses located along West Tefft Street.
3. **Traffic Calming.** Feasible measures should be implemented to encourage slower driving and increase safety for drivers and pedestrians and minimize the adverse effects of vehicle traffic on pedestrian activity.

New Streets, Lanes, and Pathways

New connecting local *streets* and *lanes* are important to provide access to the interiors of large properties and to neighborhoods, while avoiding cut-through traffic. *Streets* should be public and dedicated; *lanes* would be private and incorporated into parking lots and extended through properties under mutual agreements or easements. *Pathways* as pedestrian elements are also encouraged to be developed throughout a site and connect to adjacent properties.



Fig. 4-7 Concept of a lane or local street south of West Tefft Street

1. **Construction of a grid pattern of streets.** Streets should be laid out and designed consistent with the South County Area Plan Circulation Chapter, that is a curvilinear grid pattern to provide alternative access to areas than West Tefft Street.
2. **Pedestrian Linkages.** Design pedestrian circulation patterns that include pathways and trails between blocks that are safe and accessible from the street.
3. **Lanes.** Lanes should be the minimum width for safety needs, and include frequent pedestrian crossings and parallel pathways, to minimize the need to drive or walk circuitously between properties.

